

Charting New Ground: Between Tactical Urbanism and Strategic Spatial Planning

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, we highlight some of the challenges associated with strategic spatial planning, including long-time frames, limited control, translation and implementation gaps. We then explore how tactical urbanism might, in theory, address these s given its emphasis on small-scale, immediate, experimental action for long-term change. Our research with a Charter-based, principles-led, action-oriented network is then used to test these possibilities in practice. We conclude that tactical urbanism can be considered the antithesis of, complement to, or antidote depending on the disposition of planning authorities.

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Introduction

In this paper we contribute to emerging debates about strategic spatial planning by first identifying four key weaknesses that compromise its effectiveness. While we acknowledge this overview is relatively light-handed, it is a necessary preamble to our second task which is to explore and assess the extent to which tactical urbanism might be considered an ‘antithetical challenge’ to strategic spatial planning, a ‘complement’ that mitigates certain deficiencies, or an ‘antidote’ that opens up fundamentally new ways of planning where the strategic and tactical synergise. We use the Food Resilience Network and their Edible Canterbury Charter as a case through which the complementarity of these two planning approaches can be explored and evaluated.

Introducing ‘Orthodox’ Strategic Spatial Planning

There is currently considerable debate around the nature of both strategic and spatial planning, as well as a significant literature weaving these two, arguably distinctive, approaches together under the banner of strategic spatial planning. Though they are often used interchangeably, some have claimed that there are important differences in form, content, scope or purpose (Albrechts, 2004; Baker & Wong, 2013; Davoudi, 2018; Faludi, 2000; Friedmann, 2004; Hersperger et al., 2019; Mäntysalo, 2013; Shaw & Lord, 2009). For the purpose of this paper, we see it as an amalgam of future-focussed strategic planning, land-use/zoning and infrastructure provision. Strategic plans tend to present a long-term vision that has broad appeal, such as becoming ‘The World’s Most Liveable (or Sustainable or Resilient) City’ and, as Albrechts (2015, p. 510) has argued, they rarely appear too radical and tend to display at least a “rhetorical commitment to inclusivity” so as to engender broad support. Though some have

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claimed that strategic planning is often deployed as a tool of neoliberalisation, and used in city-branding exercises in the competition for investment and economic growth (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2012; Oliviera, 2015), it is also seen as a way of promoting integrated land use/zoning and infrastructure provision across different planning jurisdictions.

An example of strategic spatial planning, as a combination of aspiration, land -use and infrastructure provision across jurisdictions, is the *Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy* and *OurSpace* in Canterbury, New Zealand. This is where planning authorities from three District Councils (Waimakariri, Selwyn and Christchurch City), the Canterbury Regional Council and key stakeholders in the region, have developed the Vision that “By the year 2041, Greater Christchurch has a vibrant inner city and suburban centres surrounded by thriving rural communities and towns, connected by efficient and sustainable infrastructure” (<http://greaterchristchurch.org.nz/projects/strategy/>, accessed November 2018). This excerpt is illustrative of the ways in which strategic ambitions for sustainability, growth and development may be spatialized through land-use and physical constraints (such as areas prone to natural hazards, versatile soils and other topographical features) and infrastructure provision (such as roads, pipes, ports, libraries and so on). The Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy is also illustrative of a fairly orthodox approach to planning, whereby elected members signal a broadly desirable goal (the ‘ends’) and planners from each district consult the public and collaborate with each other to develop and evaluate alternative ways of achieving the goal (the ‘means’) before suggesting the ‘preferred option’ to those elected members. Drafts of the plan may be made available for public submissions and feedback before a final decision is made.

While this reasonably consultative style of planning addresses some of the deficiencies of top-down, technocratic approaches, it is still prone to certain weaknesses. First, in an era of rapid change, *long timeframes* of 20, 30 or even 50 years mean that strategic spatial plans directed towards achieving some fixed end-state are often outdated before the ink is dry. Even complex, dynamic modelling using vast computational power and real-time ‘big data’, struggles to accommodate election results, natural disasters, pandemics, the vicissitudes of global markets, and other uncertainties. Indeed, the challenges of gathering sufficient information and assembling that into a coherent, durable and effective planning framework is a longstanding concern for planning theory (Etzioni, 1967; Lindblom, 1959).

Second, successive decades of neoliberalisation have had variable results and impacts globally, but many suggest a distinct trend in that the *state has even less control* now than it did in the 50s and 60s (Brenner & Theodore, 2005; Peck & Tickell, 2002). This has been well-documented in literature, suggesting a shift from ‘government’ to ‘governance’ (see, for example, Lefevre, 2002). As Lobao et al. (2018, p. 389) have argued, “the erosion of the state as an institution is visible in underfunded social programmes, a smaller public sector, weakened regulatory structures, foregone infrastructure projects, public assets sales and continued privatization”. This not only raises important questions about the state’s legitimacy (Galland, 2012; Purcell, 2009), it calls into question the very ability of the state to deliver, even partially, on strategic spatial plan aspirations. This has led Olesen (2013, p. 299) to suggest that “Strategic spatial planning has to find a way to engage with the neoliberalization of its concepts and practices, if it is to remain a meaningful exercise”.

Third, while spatial expression is often signalled in strategic plans, they still generally require *translation* into other myriad other statutory (such as land-use plans or zoning ordinances) or non-statutory (such as infrastructure provisions, education) mechanisms to take effect (Mäntysalo, 2013; Mazza, 2013). This can lead to conflicting and contradictory objectives, policies and rules, as the strategy is spliced and diced into a plethora of subsidiary plans and programmes, administered by different workstreams over different scales at different speeds. The overall visionary intent may be attenuated, distorted or lost.

Finally, while there may be broad consensus around the general thrust of any strategic spatial planning aspiration – that is, very few seek an *unsustainable*, *dysfunctional* or *unliveable* city – this may be insufficient for ensuring implementation proceeds smoothly. This was, indeed, one of the reasons the market came to be seen as a more efficient mechanism for the delivery of goods and services (as per Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973). Nonetheless, within the state-led planning paradigm, as Allmendinger and Haughton (2012, p. 90) point out, even widely used public consultation exercises to facilitate broad agreement may provide only “the superficial appearances of engagement and legitimacy, whilst focusing on delivering growth expedited through some carefully choreographed processes for participation which minimise the potential for those with conflicting views to be given a meaningful hearing”. *Implementation* and the implications of such strategic spatial plans for real people in actual settings can therefore generate sometimes violent opposition (De Certeau, 1984; Lefebvre, 1992; Silva, 2016) and a glaring performance/conformance gap (Limb et al., 2020; Shahab et al., 2017). As an example, ‘sustainable infrastructure’ is mentioned in the *OurSpace* Vision, yet when 13 new cycleways were built that reduced the number of existing on-street car-parks, the City Council was threatened with arson (personal communication, June, 2017). Crucially, the journey from abstract concept to actual matter, actually matters.

Our purpose here is not to detail strategic spatial planning in all its strengths and weaknesses; rather, we seek to identify some key challenges so as to explore and evaluate alternative and/or complementary modes of planning. We highlight these issues around a) long time frames, b) loss of control, c) translation and d) implementation as a framework against which we might consider approaches where, as Krishnamurthy (2018, p. 229) has argued, “the strategic and spatial, formal, and informal frameworks of participatory practices [might] *coexist*” (Italics added). Consequently, we turn now to an overview of tactical urbanism to assess whether, in theory (for now), it has the potential to off-set those weaknesses outlined above. We later describe the Food Resilience Network and their use of the Edible Canterbury Charter as a case for evaluation ‘in practice’.

Tactical Urbanism: ‘Orthodox’ Planning in Reverse?

Current scholarship interrogating the nexus between formal and informal planning has led to many questions about what planning is, where it occurs, who does it, and for what purpose (Fainstein & Filippis, 2016; Friedmann, 2004; Healey, 2010; Sandercock, 2003). As Sager (2016, p. 1263) has argued, many planning activities and actors have previously gone unnoticed given they can be “unpretentious, ... oppositional yet only modestly antagonistic” whilst still contributing to a well-functioning democracy. Now, researchers have become increasingly aware of the diversity and abundance of unofficial plans and planners, practices and practitioners, and a distinctive body of work theorising these is emerging under the banner of Tactical Urbanism. Lydon and Garcia (2012) have proposed a typology of such practices, ranging from unsanctioned or illegal acts (such as guerrilla gardening), through Do-It-Yourself urbanism, to those initiatives that are endorsed, supported or even initiated by the state including some Urban Living Laboratories (Bulkeley et al., 2018), Pop Ups, and other place activation projects.

Tactical urbanism emphasises short-term action for long-term change which, at least on the face of it, signals the inverse of strategic spatial planning as a long-term, far-reaching, state-led activity. There are other important differences where, according to Lydon and Garcia (2012), tactical urbanism works through five principles which are:

- A deliberate, phased approach to instigating change;
- An offering of local ideas for local planning challenges;

- Short-term commitment and realistic expectations;
- Low-risks, with possibly a high reward; and
- The development of social capital between citizens, and the building of organisational capacity between public/private institutions, non-profit/NGOs, and their constituents.

There is a plethora of examples of tactical urbanism being used to revitalise neighbourhoods, build awareness of – and develop solutions for – homelessness, garnish support for cycleways, increase adult literacy rates, and so on. While long-term improvements are the ultimate goal, there is much stronger emphasis on a) the iterative and emergent nature of the change and b) hands-on, practical experimentation to guide that iteration. This is evident in leading tactical urbanist networks and organisations such as the Street Plans Collaborative whose exhortation to “Build, Measure, Learn” is mirrored by that of the Project for Public Spaces (www.pps.org) who advocate for a “Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper” approach to planning and place-making (Figure 1). As Wohl (2017, p. 1) has argued, tactical urbanism is thus able to harness “relational forces *preceding* design interventions [in their contexts] rather than unfolding *by means of* design interventions”.

Tactical urbanism does, in some respects, resonate rather well with some seminal debates in planning theory, such as Lindblom’s idea of successive limited comparisons articulated in the *Lindblom (1959)*. There he called for a more rigorous analysis of planning that departed from theoretical ideals associated with rational decision-making, but better represented what he saw in planning practice. He subsequently detailed a ‘method’ where ends and means are less distinct, where ‘good policy’ is that which is generally agreed to be good (though not necessarily the ‘best’ for meeting a specific objective), but where extensive analysis of possible outcomes, alternative policies and values is neglected. Lindblom acknowledged that this method may lead to mistakes and unintended outcomes, however, catastrophic failure may be avoided simply because such plans would never be written ‘*once and for all*’, but would evolve through a series of successive, but potentially disjointed, incremental changes.

The spectre of disjointed incrementalism perhaps explains why this method of muddling through was largely spurned by orthodox planning authorities who sought to retain control and rationally steer the ship in a clear direction. In contrast, tactical urbanism does not assume control; indeed tactics have been regarded as adaptations made in response to the dictates of the more powerful (De Certeau, 1984). That said, where Lindblom saw muddling through and disjointed incrementalism arising from a lack of control, tactical urbanism takes that ‘deliberately phased’ or ‘jointed incrementalism’ approach of short-term action for long terms goals. Tactical urbanism can thus be read *both* as a way of adapting the strategies of the more powerful as well as adaptations to strategies.

Tactical urbanism has been associated with a diversity of programmes, projects and activities – many of which are unsanctioned, if not illegal; thus it can also be read as a *political activity*

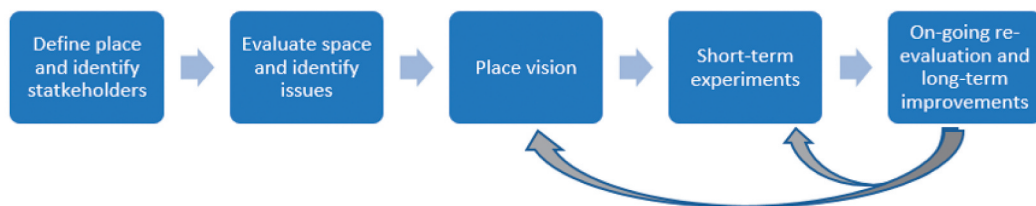


Figure 1. Project for public space’s approach to place-making.

expressing ones right to the city (Iveson, 2013; Fabian & Samson, 2016; Spataro, 2016; Vallance et al., 2017; but see also Harvey, 2012; Lefebvre, 1992; Mitchell, 2003). For some (Sarmiento et al., 2018) tactical urbanism occupies a fairly neutral position between Do-It-Yourself urbanism (which tends to be community-led and directed towards functional improvements) and guerrilla or insurgent urbanism (which includes unsanctioned, critical, and explicitly political acts of a potentially more radical nature). For others (Finn, 2014; Iveson, 2013; Lennon & Moore, 2018) using De Certeau's (1984) understanding of tactics as adaptations to the conditions created by the (more powerful) strategists, tactical urbanism is necessarily political. On this basis Webb (2018, p. 63) suggests that:

Tactical urbanism has the potential to ... open up alternative political sites within the city as well as alternative methods of political debate which are not dependent on, or even centred around, verbal and textual exchanges ... It breaks from traditional planning approaches which have advocated a linear separation of debate from action, instead incorporating action, in the form of experimentation with temporary physical changes and social events, as instrumental within the process of understanding places and their possible futures.

Importantly, this highlights the ability of tactical urbanism to shift the arena of planning to pavements and parks (thus potentially enabling and privileging a different set of participants) in non-discursive ways.

This overview therefore raises some interesting questions about the compatibility of strategic spatial planning and tactical urbanism. In our literature review above, it appears that tactical urbanism *in theory* may be weak where strategic spatial planning is strong, and vice versa. They operate at different scales, assume almost opposite levels of control, and they favour very distinctively different implementation pathways. Politically, the relationship is more complex, with the literature suggesting almost incompatible paths. To test these relationships in practice, we turn now to an investigation of the Food Resilience Network and their Edible Canterbury Charter operating in Christchurch, New Zealand. We present our data thematically, based on the four challenges associated with strategic spatial planning identified in our earlier discussion: a) long time frames, b) loss of control, c) translation and d) implementation.

Methodology

Our previous research in Christchurch, New Zealand had enabled us to establish good relationships with a wide range of planners, government officials and members of third sector organisations and community groups. As a consequence, the research team had, collectively, very good connections that enabled us to collate a diverse array of potential tactical urbanism projects that would highlight the strengths and weaknesses of this approach against emerging criteria associated with micro-spatial practice and strategic spatial planning. We proceeded iteratively, first identifying a long-list of potential projects, then having conversations with key contacts to create a short-list. One of our contacts suggested early on that one criterion for shortening the list should be a project/plan/programme that, although modest in scope, had the potential to promote systemic change. He gave the example of the Life in Vacant Spaces brokerage (<https://lives.org.nz/>) which connects vacant lot/site owners with site users. He saw this as fundamental to Christchurch's emerging reputation as a 'transitional city' and an exemplar of 'adaptive urbanism'. This usefully placed some parameters around our enquiry and directed our focus towards a 'systemic' case study operating over varying scales and spheres of work.

Another of our early contacts worked at the Christchurch City Council and he identified a number of Charters being developed that were making city-wide systems behave differently.¹ Of these Charter-based organisations, he thought the Food Resilience Network would be particularly useful in addressing our research questions around the compatibility of tactical urbanism and strategic spatial planning because there was a degree of overlap signalled in the Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy (OurSpace) and the Food Resilience Network/Edible Canterbury Charter. They both took a 'Canterbury-wide' view and both had long-term vision, thus ensuring some kind of comparability.

We subsequently conducted our fieldwork – interviews and observations along with an analysis of secondary data – in the nature of bricolage which, as Kincheloe (2005, p. 324) describes: "In its hard labors in the domain of complexity, the bricolage views research methods actively rather than passively, meaning that we actively construct our research methods from the tools at hand rather than passively receiving the 'correct', universally applicable methodologies". Thus, along with the traditional tools of interview schedules, notepaper, cameras and recorders, we took gardening gloves, made time to share kai (the Māori word for food) and conversation and, on occasion, worked with our participants on other projects.

For ethical reasons, we always made our best attempt to let those we were working with know we were undertaking research; however, at this second stage of the research, our focus was not on what people were doing, nor were we seeking to deliberately sway particular outcomes. Instead, we wanted to understand (by experiencing first-hand) how the Charter guided actual day-to-day work (as we were asked to do it), and use this to explore the interface between strategic spatial planning and tactical urbanism. 'Conversations' at this stage often began with others asking us about why we were there on-site, and we were able to provide research information sheets and contact details.

These various connections and activities promoted a better understanding of, and access to, key informants for more in-depth, semi-structured interviews in the third stage of the research. These interviews were conducted between August 2017 and May 2018 with nine participants in settings that included offices, gardens and cafes. Interviewees represented organisations and businesses that had all signed the Edible Canterbury Charter; they were employed by these organisations rather than volunteers or beneficiaries of their services. Given that these interviews were mostly conducted in informal (and often noisy) settings, we made detailed notes (rather than transcribed recordings) of what was said by our participants. Participants also provided us with documents (meeting minutes, annual reports and FRN guiding documents) and directed us to websites that were important for helping us build up a picture of Food Resilience Network activities. These are also referred to in the analysis below.

Charting New Ground: The Food Resilience Network

Starting in 2010, the Canterbury region of New Zealand experienced an extended earthquake sequence lasting several years that led to a period of unprecedented turmoil. During this sequence, there were 185 fatalities, almost 70% of the Christchurch Central Business District was destroyed or demolished and, eventually, almost 8,000 homes were purchased by the Crown and deconstructed, with residents relocating elsewhere. The Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority was established to oversee recovery of the region. A variety of community groups responded to the diverse needs of people during this time: some already existed and took on extended or new responsibilities for a short time, while others were new groups established for specific purposes and disbanded once their services were no longer needed (Vallance & Carlton, 2015).

For some of these groups, particular issues associated with food resilience were brought into stark relief through these activities. So, in September of 2013, the Rangiora Earthquake Express and

Soil & Health Canterbury arranged a *Feeding our Future* hui (the Māori word for a meeting or assembly with special significance) at the University of Canterbury. This was attended by about 30 representatives of organisations interested in “[making] more good food more accessible to more people in Canterbury” (FRN annual report 2016, p. 2). The attendees generally had a vision for the future of food in Canterbury that had been guiding them in their work for some time, but they found strength in the diverse linkages and support that a broader network could provide. It was out of this focus on working out how to work together that the Food Resilience Network was established.

Following the hui, a Steering Group was established to develop the Food Resilience Network’s Terms of Reference. Aware of the energy and bureaucracy involved in setting up a new organisation, the Group opted to proceed under the umbrella of the local Soil & Health branch. While a subgroup worked with the City Council on a parallel process to develop a Food Resilience policy and Action Plan, the main focus of the Steering Group was to develop a set of values and principles to act as ‘a point of reference for everyone who was becoming part of the movement’ (Morris, n.d., p. 5). These principles then informed the Edible Canterbury Charter, as shown in Figure 2.

The Edible Canterbury Charter uses these core *principles* for a mode of planning that *guides* the activity of signatories, as opposed to *rules* that must be followed. As one interviewee put it, they provide a framework for action that provides something “more like ethical solidarity than specific management practice” (extract from interview notes, Food Resilience Network co-ordinator). The vision and principles help signatories navigate decision-making and action choices that confront them, sometimes on a daily basis where decisions must be made ‘on the spot’, but also when making longer term plans in more deliberative contexts. The willingness to align with an ethical compass contrasts with other forms of alliance such as paying subscription fees, taking on a specific role or set of activities (as when joining a club) or gaining certification (where one complies with standards), as it allows for flexibility when making decisions in the field.

Our first interviewee – a council employee and member of the Food Resilience Network steering group – was very direct in his view that the principles underpinning the Charter-based model was the ‘opposite of strategic planning’ because it focused on the:

WHY – expressed in a vision based on principles built together (using open strategies)
 WHAT – do we need to get results
 HOW – actions
 WHO – accountability, responsibility

In his view:

Orthodox planning operates in reverse. Often responsibility is handed to infrastructure people with Key Performance Indicators not connected to the ‘why’. Strategies are not connected to people or resources and are often out of date before it begins. Charters are more about concepts, principles, direction, relationships, emergence, collaboration, action ... (Extract from interview notes, Food Resilience Network steering group)

We now turn to results that indicate various ways in which the Food Resilience Network’s Charter – as an example of principles-based, action-oriented tactical urbanism – is able to mitigate or address the four issues we identified with strategic spatial planning outlined above: timeframes, control/collaboration, translation into other statutory and non-statutory documents, and implementation matters.



We, the signatories to this Charter, believe that all people in the Canterbury region have the right to fresh, nourishing food that is grown and prepared locally in ways that are ecologically sustainable and culturally appropriate.

We support the Food Resilience Network's vision of 'a patchwork of food producing initiatives based around local hotspots and linked together like a ribbon woven into the fabric of our communities'.

As such, we commit to working collaboratively with the other signatories of this Charter to make this vision a reality.

Edible Canterbury Charter

— an initiative of the Food Resilience Network

Values and Principles

Accessibility: access to nutritious food is the right of all people and is a basic determinant of health;

Mahinga kai: food gathering and food growing spaces that reflect the values of local iwi are integral to the vision of a food resilient region;

Cultural appropriateness: food and culture are intimately connected and the many different cultural groups that make up our region's population should all have access to food that is culturally appropriate to them within the limits of our climate;

Ecological sustainability: a resilient food system implies one in which food is grown in ways that regenerate the natural environment (for example using principles of organic agriculture, permaculture, agro-ecology etc);

Social enterprise and local economic development: we endorse the establishment of organisations and businesses that grow, process and distribute food locally, and the development of a diverse local food economy;

Food education: education about nourishing food for all ages and in a variety of learning places is crucial;

Community empowerment: everyone has a role to play in creating a food resilient region and everyone's role is valued;

Collaboration: creating a food resilient region requires partnerships between many agencies and cannot be owned by any single group.

Figure 2. The Edible Canterbury Charter (reproduced here with permission of the Food Resilience Network).

Timeframes

The Food Resilience Network does have a long-term vision for the region that is 'spatialised', but as a "patchwork of food producing initiatives" (see Edible Canterbury Charter, figure 4). There is a long term vision, however there is no particular timeframe by which this should be achieved and the emphasis is on "what can we do now". Although individual signatories or projects might have specific

goals and milestones (the Ōtākaro Orchard being one example) or align with formal strategies (such as the CCC's Food Resilience Policy), the Food Resilience Network does not signal that a particular *end* state will be realised by, for example, 2050, as is common in formal strategic plans.

Much more importantly, the *means* of enacting and embedding the principles in habitual practice is the goal because it is through these that short, medium and longer-term goals will be achieved. Signatories are invited to abide by the principles (the 'why') from the outset and, in this way, the goal is achieved immediately. The journey is therefore as important as (if not more important than) the destination, and the means are as important as the ends. In this way, the timeframes differ from those of formal strategic planning in being both indefinite (without specific timeframes) and immediate.

Collaboration and the 'Loss of Control'

The principles emphasise the value of the process (the journey), and that achieving the vision will take collaboration and/or cooperation. Rather than collaboration signalling a loss of control over the process, building relationships are explicitly recognised as the primary means of achieving the 'why'. Arguably, the patchwork is already there to some extent, but it will take networking – that is, the net *working* together – to facilitate a coalescence that will bring about broad, systemic change.

The Food Resilience Network Action Plan (Food Resilience Network, 2014) details the processes that will make this vision a reality, and the first 'Action' is to *Cultivate Relationships*. As one example of how this process works in practice:

Ooooby aims to create a stronger local food economy by connecting small-scale local suppliers to the local market without having to go through the big supermarkets. While their role is ostensibly logistical (i.e. to connect producers and consumers), in order to do this they take time to build personal relationships with their suppliers, and look for ways to improve 'customer happiness'. (Extract from interview notes, Ooooby Hub co-ordinator)

More specifically, Action 1 specifies that leaders should be identified and supported, and potential partners encouraged to join the network and think about how they might contribute to the vision. A variety of methods, from crowdsourcing tools to face-to-face communication, are used to share information and secure sponsors.

While a focus on relationship building is not in itself novel, it is the emphasis on forging *new* relationships between ostensibly *different* groups that is key to the Food Resilience Network's processes. The second Action in the Food Resilience Network Action Plan focuses on the practicalities of food production by *Growing Understanding, Skills and Celebrating Local Food*, and this in turn requires new forms of collaboration to be nurtured across the region.

The Charter brought together groups that had never before worked together. E.g. Soil&Health and the Horticultural Society had previously been at odds but came together under the Charter. Similarly, Community and Public Health and the Heritage Fruit Archive didn't know each other before this, but now work together e.g. by putting heritage trees in schools. (Extract from interview notes, former Food Resilience Network co-ordinator)

The Orchards in Schools programme referred to in the above extract was specifically set up to share expertise of the older generation in the Christchurch Horticultural Society with young people in schools. Successful schools then help others implement similar programmes especially through gardening hui that facilitate these connections. Thus, the first two actions in the Food Resilience Network Action Plan are actually process-oriented. Here again we see that the journey is as

important as the destination and this marks a point of difference with more formal, strategic planning.

In post-quake Canterbury there have been numerous recovery plans. Some, like the Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy, cover the Christchurch, Waimakariri and Selwyn districts. The three territorial authorities along with Environment Canterbury (the Regional Council), the New Zealand Transport Agency, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu (the governance entity of the local Ngāi Tahu tribe), Canterbury District Health Board, the Greater Christchurch Group and Regenerate Christchurch are formal partners. The general public are usually (though not always, with the Central City Development Unit's '100 Day Plan being a notable exception) consulted on the Greater Christchurch plans and strategies and people are encouraged to "have their say".

Conversely, the Food Resilience Network asks that signatories "walk the talk" with individuals and organisations taking responsibility for specific actions and roles. The Charter's diverse signatories operate according to their own specific purpose, but align their contribution with Charter principles when and where they can; they are asked to report on their successes with reference to these principles through Food Resilience Network reporting mechanisms (most notably their Annual Reports). Though this approach is not without its challenges, 'collaboration' does not create the kinds of uncertainty and imbalance that it does for strategic planning. Rather, collaboration is seen as both the means and an end in itself.

Translation: From Principles to Parsley

While the cultivation of new and existing relationships is key to 'who' is part of the Food Resilience Network, there is also a strong focus on 'what' is needed to translate principles into outcomes. Action 3 in the Food Resilience Network Action Plan addresses some of the 'infra-structural' requirements that will *Propagate and Support Edible Gardens*. This includes the 'soft' infrastructure of raising the Network's profile; encouraging volunteers; and linking new and existing community gardens with businesses, schools and suppliers. It also encompasses the 'hard' infrastructure of suitable garden sites, heritage species suited to local conditions, and demonstration gardens. Action 4 seeks to *Strengthen Our Local Food Economy* through increased local food production, distribution and access. Local growers, markets, educators, cooperatives and distributors are connected. Finally, Action 5 – *Grow Supportive Policies* – is directed towards governance and policy structures that could be changed at a variety of scales in order to promote food resilience.

But alongside these visions for change, there is also a recognition that a lot of 'what' is needed for food resilience is already present in the region. As one interviewee noted,

The CCC have 780 parks and gardens so there is an enormous opportunity to dot fruit/nut trees around them and invite local communities to care for them. A first step is to take the 'public stewardship' role into people's own gardens. So they might start with an easy care heritage apple. Or they might adopt a tree, as could residents associations. If everyone looked after their patch (including water monitoring for example) it would create a network of care. So we ask 'what would this need to succeed' and use that as the start. (Extract from interview notes, Christchurch City Council sustainability advisor)

This connection of 'what' is needed (such as regulation and relationships) to get results, along with specific measures that address 'how' this can be achieved (through demonstration gardens and heritage trees) has resulted in perceptible differences in the city's urban landscape. But again, these achievements depend on net-working and relationship building in accordance with the Food Resilience Network's approach to collaboration.

As one example, the success (in terms of both good process and good produce) of the Orchards in Schools programme depends on support from the governors and senior managers of a school because it requires a place and time in the curriculum; teachers who can facilitate a student-centred programme; ongoing support from the Canterbury Horticultural Society who provide expert knowledge and resources; and linkages between teachers at different schools in the form of peer support through, for example, gardening hui.

Yet, if successful, the Orchards in Schools programme may then synergise with other school garden initiatives such as Edible Schools (facilitated by the Canterbury District Health Board), Kids' Edible Gardens, and the Garden to Table programme (both facilitated by charitable trusts). The subsystems or mini-networks may then connect like rhizomes to other, broader initiatives such as another Charter-based network, Healthy Families Christchurch (facilitated by Sport Canterbury). Cultivate Christchurch is another example which, as a social enterprise, deals with private businesses, charitable foundations, the Ministry of Youth Development, Work and Income New Zealand, local restaurants and cafes, and individual customers. Its activities are similarly diverse, as they are ostensibly an urban farm focused on food production, but cut across youth justice and mental health issues, education, and recycling.

This ecology of practice subverts the stricter hierarchy of formal planning approaches in New Zealand where central government establishes National Policy Statements that Regional Plans must 'give effect to', and Regional Policies that 'cannot be inconsistent with'. City/District Plans must 'give effect to' Regional Policy Statements and cannot be inconsistent with Regional Plans, and so on. District Plans then have objectives, policies, standards and rules that are ultimately enforceable. The hierarchy and sometimes uneasy relationship with other non-statutory planning activities provides multiple points at which the translation from vision to implementation may fall down. In contrast, the Food Resilience Network has a flat decision-making structure, and decision-makers and those implementing decisions are often the same people. The Food Resilience Network's 'translation' is therefore more like working with different dialects rather than a completely different language.

Implementation: Cultivating Gaps between Abstract Consensus and Active Dissensus

Given its agenda to disrupt and transform the landscape of food production and consumption in Canterbury, it is perhaps not surprising that Food Resilience Network activities involve tension and dissensus. Yet, in contrast to strategic planning processes that seek to build consensus between those who are able to negotiate at the decision-making table, the Food Resilience Network has a somewhat different approach to dealing with tensions that inevitably arise when a diverse array of partners are brought together under one banner. This is evident from the initial stage of involvement, when potential Food Resilience Network members are asked to sign the Charter:

Who can sign the Charter? If we have a vetting process, what is it? We have made signing the Charter a pre-requisite for joining the Food Resilience Network. By doing this there is a commitment to uphold the principles of the Charter. But the Food Resilience Network needs to maintain principles of openness and willingness to collaborate – so if Monsanto/McDonalds wants to sign they should be allowed to do so as long as they can point to things they do/changes they've made that are directly in line with the principles of the Charter. (Extract from interview notes, former FRN co-ordinator)

Thus, signatories of the Charter agree to follow these principles but, importantly, they are not penalised for shortfalls as one sees in Compliance, Monitoring and Enforcement. Instead, the network celebrates successes. These successes are included in the Food Resilience Network's annual reporting framework which, not only communicates numerical indicators (such as the number of

volunteer hours, funding received, and facebook likes), but also provides a range of case study narratives on various network activities as they relate directly to Charter principles. Many of these are also documented on the Food Resilience Network's Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/foodresiliencenetwork/>), and the stories of different Food Resilience Network members are prominent in the Edible Canterbury website (<https://ediblecanterbury.org.nz/>).

As such, *co-operation* is made possible without consensus, positioning the Charter as flexible enough to accommodate slow and fast food, organic and industrial agriculture. These extremities of collaboration arguably remain untested, however, as Monsanto and McDonalds have so far not joined the network, whereas slow and organic food is well represented in current signatories (FRN annual report 2016, p. 4).

Yet, even if signatories appear to be similar, tensions are nevertheless evident in the network. Although the Food Resilience Network was formed from a number of pre-existing organisations and groups, a decision was made to embark on a work programme to create a local food hub in central Christchurch – the Ōtākaro Orchard (<https://otakaroorchard.org.nz/>). But rather than draw the network together, this project has almost served to drive it apart:

Main issue has been around the work programme itself. At present it appears to be mainly focused on Ōtākaro Orchard, and some members of the network are unhappy about this. The Food Resilience Network action plan includes a number of different elements, and it isn't possible to achieve all of these at once. The decision was made to focus on the high profile orchard but still need to bring everyone else along too – some members aren't happy about the orchard gobbling up all of the resources. But one way to deal with this issue is to focus on communicating with people across the network (newsletter is key here – covers a range of activities, not just the orchard) and also manage expectations. An additional co-ordinator has recently been employed – his main role is possibly to focus on communication and attend to the wider network. (Extract from interview notes, former FRN co-ordinator)

In this extract we see that, rather than reverting to 'rules', the response was to return to an emphasis on the 'why' and 'how', particularly by (re)building relationships through the appointment of a 'networker'.

Solidifying the principles of the Charter into the rigid, physical form of a single project continues to be contentious – some want to distance themselves from the Food Resilience Network as a legal entity, identifying instead with the Charter as a less tangible movement working towards food resilience in the region. While this may lead to a fracturing of the Food Resilience Network in years to come, this may ultimately reflect the complementary methods of tactical urbanism and strategic planning, with the Food Resilience Network taking over the strategic focus of the orchard project, and the Charter continuing to support the various activities of individual organisations and groups through a re-turn to principled action.

Discussion and Conclusion

The broad desirability of strategic ambitions like sustainability, liveability or resilience are rarely disputed; very few argue for unsustainability, less liveability or more vulnerability. Nonetheless, strategic spatial planning as a vehicle for delivering on these kinds of ambitions is compromised by a) long time frames for plan development and delivery in a rapidly changing and uncertain environment, b) the need to collaborate and compromise which entails a loss of control, c) translation into very different languages of statutory and non-statutory land use and infrastructure plans, as well as myriad other projects and programmes, and d) an implementation gap that arises when abstract ideals of decision-makers meet the concrete realities of those affected by the plan(s). The issue we discuss here is to what extent tactical urbanism might address these weaknesses, offer a complementary approach or, indeed, chart a new path for planning.

At first glance, tactical urbanism is strong where strategic spatial planning is weak. It is the inverse in the sense that *immediate, short-term action and modest achievements* – for the Food Resilience Network at least – were prioritised over a distant, fairly fixed end-state. Further, collaboration and cooperation were not seen as a loss of control, nor as a means to an end, but as *ends in themselves*. Control or even leadership of the network was always assumed to be partial at best, thus building relationships – compromise and cooperation were integral to ‘the net’ actually working. Like strategic spatial planning, translation principles into actual projects and programmes was required however, *enabling rather than enforcing* the ‘right thing’ was the preferred approach. The Charter principles were key in shaping the ‘right thing’. Finally, the ‘implementation gap’ was moderated because the decision-makers and ‘do-ers’ were often the same people, and the test was a pragmatic ‘will it work’ rather than ‘does it follow the rules’. Consequently, this light discussion might lead to the not particularly unexpected conclusion that tactical urbanism and strategic spatial planning do represent ‘complementary’ approaches.

As a complement, we acknowledge that strategic spatial planning and tactical urbanism operate in different spheres. The first generally operates at large scales, with big budgets, expansive teams, delivering substantial and permanent infrastructure that signals and supports particular land uses (and vice versa). Strategic spatial planning necessarily deploys predictive modelling and projections of established trends to inform decisions about sewer lines, motorways, industrial zones, shopping centres and housing developments. Conversely, tactical urbanism as a *micro*-spatial practice, coalescing around generally like-minded individuals for a fairly specific purpose is, of course, concerned with immediate results obtained using vastly different tools.

This implies that, when held apart as distinct modes, tactical urbanist methods can be used to complement and augment individual strategic spatial planning components, such as transport, green-spaces, or housing. When funding is secured for implementation of a particular aspect of the overall strategic spatial plan, for example, budgets might be allocated for initiatives that enable tactical urbanism at small, or micro-scales. Thus whilst the strategic lays out a cycleway or greenspace network, tactical approaches might be more appropriate for context-dependent elements like plantings, cycleway widths, connections to bus-stops, and complementary service provision like water fountains, access points and so on. Tactical urbanism might usefully serve to enrich orthodox planning and make it more lively rather than relying on graphs, charts, statistics and conventional written submissions during consultation exercises.

Yet, finding a place for tactical urbanism within a fundamentally unchanged strategic spatial planning paradigm is to ignore tactical urbanism’s more fundamental contribution. First, while we cannot argue the importance of the strategic spatial planning project – we do appreciate well-positioned pipes, roads and rubbish collection – the comparison with tactical urbanism highlights those weaknesses associated with long timeframes, lack of control, the need for translation, and issues around implementation. Consequently, instead of asking how tactical urbanism might complement strategic spatial planning, it might be more useful to ask ‘how can strategic spatial planning become more tactical’ so as to address these weaknesses.

To answer this question, we return to Lindblom’s method of ‘muddling through’ which highlighted issues arising from *disjointed* incremental change as the result of an *inadequate evaluation of alternatives*. Our results suggest that when it comes to managing long time frames, there is value in developing a more tactical – that is, deliberately phased and explicitly iterative (rather than disjointedly incremental) – planning process, guided by a more adaptive ‘if this happens, then we will do that’ disposition. We are starting to see this sort of flexibility used in adaptive planning pathways for sea-level rise and other effects related to climate change under the banner of Decision-Making under Deep Uncertainty (Malekpoura et al., 2020; Walker et al., 2019).

As one example, the progression from ‘protect’ assets with hard infrastructure, to ‘accommodate’ change by, for example, developing amphibious housing, to ‘retreat’ and relocation of assets (Doberstein et al., 2019) is articulated in New Zealand’s (Hawkes Bay) Tangoio to Clifton Coastal Hazard Strategy. Trigger points for iterative/jointed progression are identified collaboratively with provisions for each contingency sketched out in advance. The on-going need to evaluate alternatives using a range of data is recognised and explicitly planned for. This tactical approach to strategic spatial planning responds to Rauws (2017, p. 32) observation that planning operates in a ‘world of becoming’. We must, therefore, “move away from the ambition to achieve predefined outcomes” (Rauws & De Roo, 2016, p. 1052) and focus more on promoting dispositions that enable adaptability. As the Edible Canterbury Charter case has shown, the real value of tactical urbanism might be in fostering the necessary disposition needed to willingly accommodate the unknown and unforeseen in a rapidly changing world.

Such a disposition would encourage small scale, rapid testing to inform the development and evaluation of alternative courses of action. Where ‘muddling through’ was seen to come from an inability to evaluate all alternatives (which is, of course, impossible), our research suggests accepting a variety of evidence is essential. We saw evidence that experimentation and qualitative data formed the evaluative basis for the Food Resilience Network, and we would argue that this could serve strategic spatial planning equally well. These sorts of experiments were evident in the exemplar orchard where the aim was to generate new knowledge and develop new relationships as much as it was to produce fruit and vegetables. This approach is also evident in Urban Living Laboratories that, as Bulkeley et al. (2018) note, may operate at strategic (i.e. central government), civic (i.e. municipal) or organic (i.e. community or neighbourhood) levels, and exhibit one of four ‘dispositions’ whereby the ‘trial’ and the ‘enclave’ attempt to retain some control over the experiment, whereas the ‘demonstration’ and the ‘platform’ allow for more contingency.

Another implication for strategic spatial planning is recognising that, when operating more tactically, taking an ‘if this, then that’ and accepting different forms of evidence, a fluid range of opportunities and challenges will be presented and withdrawn. This fluidity can be managed through the appointment of dedicated staff, employed specifically to keep this ‘net’ working both horizontally and vertically. This, in part, helps address one participant’s observation that, in orthodox strategic spatial planning: “Often responsibility is handed to infrastructure people with Key Performance Indicators not connected to the ‘why’. Strategies are not connected to people or resources and are often out of date before it begins. Charters are more about concepts, principles, direction, relationships, emergence, collaboration, action ... ” (Extract from interview notes, Food Resilience Network steering group). There is thus an important lesson here for local authorities and municipal managers and planners about the level of resourcing, skill sets and location of this role within the organisation for this tactical approach to be effective.

The nature of the effect is also important because it is probably as a more radical ‘platform’ (Bulkeley et al., 2018) or ‘arena’ that Charters like the Food Resilience Network offer perhaps the most intriguing benefits and challenges to strategic spatial planning, largely because they have the potential to establish “the conditions in which multiple new socio-material relations and arrangements can be leveraged” (Bulkeley et al., 2018, p. 325). The Food Resilience Network exhibited a distributed form of leadership, and the conflation of ends and means was actually seen as desirable. Instead of choosing the ‘best’ way of achieving a specific objective, ‘good’ programmes and projects were those that expressed – or did not contravene – the generally agreed upon *principles* and *values* that signatories agreed to when they signed the Edible Canterbury Charter. This provided a basis for cooperation if not consensus, and consequently a wider range of actors and contributions could be recognised as both valid and valuable. The Charters, as a version of tactical

urbanism, therefore speaks to Rauws (2017) argument that more adaptive forms of planning must first influence and create *fertile grounds* for plan development before focussing on plan content and process. This applies as much to the state and municipal stakeholders involved in strategic spatial planning as it does to neighbourhoods and communities.

While tactical urbanism as a *method* offers planners a potential complement to strategic spatial planning, as a political project or *methodology* – that is, one that interrogates the *logic* of method deployment – the relationship between the two is therefore demonstrably more challenging. We saw this when the Food Resilience Network *explicitly* tried to merge ends and means, and *deliberately* sought a tighter relationship between decision-makers and do-ers. They intentionally inverted the hallmarks of orthodox planning where elected members identify and develop aims and objectives (the ends) and ideologically neutral, objective and unbiased planners propose the most expedient means of achieving that goal (Allmendinger, 2009). Further confounding of the orthodox model occurred when those less conventional, experimental forms of evidence and practical skills were privileged during the implementation of sometimes unsanctioned acts in a diverse range of settings. Therefore, as a *methodology*, tactical urbanism confers legitimacy, credibility and authority on a very different set of places, practices ... and practitioners. In so doing, tactical urbanism challenges the foundations of orthodox planning practice and may be seen as fundamentally incompatible.

In conclusion, we suggest there is a spectrum along which strategic spatial planning and tactical urbanism might (not) align. A disposition oriented to formal, orthodox, state-led strategic spatial planning might see tactical urbanism as the *antithesis* of good planning, a weed to be controlled or perhaps tolerated, provided it does not spread too widely and wildly. Moving along, tactical urbanism might offer a useful *complement* to orthodox strategic spatial planning. This is because certain forms – such as the Charters – can provide a medium through which a broader range of interlocutors may participate in state-led consultation exercises, and provide experiential and experimental data to inform plan development. However, for planning authorities with a less conventional disposition that wish to avoid disjointed incrementalism whilst promoting a more adaptive urbanism, tactical urbanism and the use of Charters may provide a useful *antidote* for some of the vulnerabilities of orthodox strategic spatial planning. This would require strategic spatial planners to first prepare the ground for future work, focussing on why the plan is necessary rather than what the plan's contents should be. In addition to aligning land use and infrastructure across jurisdictions, this will demand the inclusion and elevation of unconventional actors, alternative methods of analysis and evaluation, conducted in a range of settings using a contingent 'if this, then that' approach that acknowledges (if not embraces) uncertainty and the ceding of control. While this may challenge orthodox practice, the benefits may be experienced in an expanded capability and capacity as 'new' practitioners emerge who are able to help chart new ground for planning.

Note

1. Among these were Healthy Christchurch (<https://www.healthychristchurch.org.nz/>), the New Zealand Heritage Charter that the Christchurch City Council had recently become signatory to (<https://icomos.org.nz/charters/>), the Avon Otakaro Network (<http://www.avonotakaronetwork.co.nz/about-us/charter.html>), One Voice Te Reo Kotahi (OVTRK) (<http://onevoicetereokotahi.blogspot.com/>) and the Food Resilience Network (FRN) (<https://ediblecanterbury.org.nz/>).

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